

There are 60 *Learn and Earn* schools opening this fall across the state. Most schools are located on a community college or university campus and allow students to take college courses, tuition free. After no more than five years of study, students earn a high school diploma and two years of college credit or an associate's degree for free. Other new schools are opening in the next few weeks in Bertie, Cleveland, Currituck, Forsyth, Guilford, Hertford, Hyde, Iredell, Jackson, Johnston, Madison, Rockingham, Tyrrell, and Warren counties.

Students who do not live near a *Learn and Earn* high school can receive college credit for free by enrolling in *Learn and Earn Online*. As with *Learn and Earn* high schools, students can earn both high school diploma and an associate's degree or two years of transferable college credit to any state university in up to five years of study. Access to these courses is provided at every public high school in the state.

The EARN (Education Access Rewards North Carolina) Grants join with other forms of assistance, such as federal Pell Grants, to replace the need for student loans. When fully-implemented, the EARN grants will provide 25,000 students from families earning less than 200 percent of the poverty level, \$4,000 a year in assistance for two years. Students receiving the grant will be required to keep their grades up and pay some nominal costs through earned income or work service credit. These grants make a debt-free college degree attainable for many students. For more information about any of these programs visit [www.nclearnandearn.gov](http://www.nclearnandearn.gov).

To communicate to students and parents about the *Learn and Earn* and EARN grant programs, Easley this week announced a local and statewide outreach effort targeted at students, parents and teachers. The Governor has asked the school superintendents to work with distance learning coordinators and communications directors in their districts to develop local outreach and communication plans and to begin implementing their plans by mid-August. Statewide communications efforts include a new *Learn and Earn* web site, television and online advertising, videos for teachers and guidance counselors to share with students in their schools, a hotline for educators and the launch of the new *Learn and Earn* Ambassador program in which students and *Learn and Earn* graduates will travel to middle and high schools in their community to promote the programs. Public Service Announcements started to air this week while other efforts will begin in the coming weeks and continue through the fall and spring.

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